

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UNDERAGE DRINKING TO BE FOCAL POINT
FOR ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH 2004

This April, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, now in its 60th year, will sponsor a month-long campaign to raise public awareness about underage drinking and other alcohol-related problems. Alcohol is a drug that can affect judgment, coordination and long-term health, and research suggests that early use of alcohol by teenagers may contribute significantly to dependence on alcohol and other drugs later in life, with 40% of children who begin using alcohol before the age of 13 becoming alcoholics at some point in their lives. Alcohol is the number one drug of choice among America's youth and is a factor in the four leading causes of death among persons ages 10 - 24.

"As a society," says Stacia Murphy, NCADD's President, "we have to do a better job persuading our citizens and our young people that alcohol use is a dead end, that they're playing Russian Roulette, not only with their own lives, but with the lives of friends, neighbors, and loved ones."

"Save a Life - End Underage Drinking" is the theme for Alcohol Awareness Month 2004, which will begin with Alcohol-Free Weekend on Friday, April 2 - Sunday, April 4. During this time, NCADD Affiliates across the country will sponsor youth-planned and youth-run Alcohol-Free events, and parents and other adults will be asked to abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages for a 72-hour period to demonstrate that alcohol isn't necessary to have a good time. In addition, throughout the month, all family members will be encouraged to learn more about alcoholism and its early symptoms and to contact Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, and local NCADD Affiliates for information about recovery.

Founded in 1944, NCADD works at the national level on policy issues related to barriers in education, prevention and treatment for alcoholics and other drug dependent persons and their families. With a nationwide network of Affiliates, NCADD provides education, information, help and hope to the public and operates a toll-free Hope Line (800-NCA-CALL) for information and referral and a National Intervention Network (800-654-HOPE) to educate and assist the families and friends of addicted persons. For more information, visit: www.ncadd.org.